UNITED
NATIONS

A S

General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/45/924
S/22062
11 January 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-fifth session
Agenda item 153
IRAQI AGGRESSION AND THE CONTINUED OCCUPATION OF KUWAIT IN FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Letter dated 10 January 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit the attached statement to Parliament by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Right Honourable Michael Manley, M.P., P.C., on the Gulf crisis and its implications for the Jamaican economy (see annex), with the request that it be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 153, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Herbert S. WALKER
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Statement to Parliament by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, The Right Honourable Michael Manley, M.P., P.C., on the Gulf crisis and its implications for the Jamaican economy, 9 January 1991

The present crisis in the Middle East, which began on 2 August last year with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, is now at a point where the world faces the imminent danger of war. In this situation I consider it necessary to state very clearly the position of the Government of Jamaica and to advise the country of the steps that we have taken and propose to take in the light of this possibility.

It will be recalled that from the very beginning the Government of Jamaica, along with our CARICOM partners, issued a statement strongly condemning the illegal and unwarranted invasion of a sovereign Member State of the United Nations.

The Security Council, with the overwhelming support of the international community, has adopted a number of resolutions calling upon Iraq to withdraw and restore full sovereignty to Kuwait, has imposed sanctions, and has authorized the use of "all necessary means" from and after 15 January in the event that Iraq does not voluntarily obey the call to withdraw.

Jamaica has fully supported and endorsed all these decisions by the United Nations. We have done so for two basic reasons.

Firstly, we recognize the duty of all countries to support the basic rule of international law that all countries must be secure within their borders and free from invasion by external powers.

Secondly, as a matter of common sense and self-interest, Jamaica, as a small country, without the means to effectively defend itself from external aggression has to depend for its security on the acceptance by the international community of this basic principle.

No one can, however, be unmindful of the dreadful consequences that will ensue from the outbreak of war. Not only the people in the countries directly involved, but the people of all countries including our own, will be affected by a conflagration of the kind that has now become a real possibility. We therefore take the view that no effort should be spared and no stone left unturned to arrive at a resolution of this situation that achieves the objective of securing Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait by peaceful means.

We believe that it should be made clear that while the withdrawal of the illegally invading forces from Kuwait is non-negotiable, once the withdrawal has taken place, then the way must be open for all outstanding issues arising strictly between Iraq and Kuwait to be negotiated, if necessary with the assistance of the United Nations or any other appropriate body.

While fully recognizing that a small country like Jamaica, far removed from the actual scene of events, can have very little impact on the outcome of this situation, my colleagues and I have nevertheless considered it our duty to make our own position crystal clear, particularly in view of the fact that the way in which this crisis is resolved is bound to impact on us one way or the other.

Accordingly, over the past few days, I along with Foreign Minister, Senator David Coore, have held discussions with Ambassadors and High Commissioners accredited to Jamaica. In these discussions we have set out our approach to this crisis in the terms that I have indicated above, and have asked them individually to convey this to their respective Governments.

I wish also to state that we have this morning held consultations with representatives of the opposition with respect to events in the Gulf. These discussions which were held at Jamaica House, involved Mr. Bruce Golding, Senator Ossie Harding and Mr. Anthony Johnson on the opposition side, and Senators David Coore and Paul Robertson and myself. I am pleased to say that we are in full agreement with respect to the position of Jamaica in relation to these events in the Middle East. I am also pleased to say that it has been agreed to establish a bi-partisan committee to monitor events and to consider the steps which should be taken in the national interest to protect, so far as may be possible, Jamaica and its people from the effects of the crisis. This will take on particular significance should there be an actual outbreak of war. Should this occur, the National Planning Council will also be alerted to help in the monitoring and co-ordinating functions.

Since the beginning of the crisis in August, the Government set up a Cabinet Sub-Committee and a technical working party to monitor events and to recommend action to be taken, where possible, to minimize the consequences which might arise for the Jamaican economy. As a result, successful steps were taken to ensure that there would be no interruption in the supply of oil. This will also hold true in the event that war breaks out although there would be other consequences with respect to oil which I will indicate.

There have been two developments which have affected Jamaica, both of which are completely outside of our control.

Firstly, the price of oil has risen sharply placing an enormously increased strain on our foreign exchange. For example, if there is no worsening of the present situation in the first three months of 1991 available figures suggest the following:

In the first quarter of 1990 oil imports cost $US 40 million. Assuming similar levels of demand for the first quarter of 1991 the cost will be $US 90 million.

The second factor affects the tourist industry. 1990 was a record year for stop-over arrivals. In fact, there was a 17 per cent increase over 1989, the previous record year. However, the United States and Canadian economies have moved into a period of recession. This, taken together with the unsettling effect of the

Gulf crisis is going to adversely affect the industry in 1991. Already the negative effect of these two factors is showing up in the bookings for the early part of 1991. It is clear that foreign exchange earnings are going to be down at the very time when our oil imports are going to be much more expensive.

Clearly, if war should break out, both these factors would be much more sharply affected placing tremendous strains on the foreign exchange situation which has, in any case presented such difficulty in recent years.

In the course of this week all Ministries directly concerned with the possible effects of war are working intensively to have ready for the Sub-Committee and Cabinet an analysis of possible effects, on the one hand, and action which can be taken to minimize these effects, on the other. On Friday afternoon this week, I will be meeting with representatives of the Churches, the private sector, unions and consumer groups.

I will take the occasion of this meeting to enlist their co-operation to ensure that everything is done to protect the country and its people as far as may be possible from the effects of the war. At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has been taking the necessary steps to trace any Jamaicans still in the Gulf region and to arrange to have them flown out if they wish to leave.

I am pleased to be able to assure the country that there are adequate supplies of basic food for the first quarter of 1991. There is no reason to believe that these supplies cannot be maintained for the rest of the year.

Oil is a somewhat different matter. As I stated earlier, there is no problem with maintaining adequate supplies. The problem is price and whether we will be able to afford normal supplies should war break out.

In the latter part of last year, the Ministry of Mining and Energy had placed increased emphasis on conservation policies and alerted the people of Jamaica to the importance of a national effort in this regard. However, should war break out, and the price show further heavy increases, it is my duty to warn the country that normal conservation methods would not be enough. We will be working very closely with both the leaders of the productive sectors along with the various consumer and worker interests to ensure that any action to conserve oil which may be necessary is done in a manner that reduces to an absolute minimum the difficulties which might arise within the economy and for people themselves.

The Ministry of Information and Culture will be devoting its energies to the fullest explanation of any action that it may be necessary to take along with the reasons for it. To this end, I will be meeting with the media at a briefing session on Friday afternoon.

I will now summarize the position. We remain firmly committed to the position which has been declared by the Security Council of the United Nations, including the uncompromising insistence that Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait. We have made it clear through diplomatic channels that while remaining absolutely committed to the

principles that are involved, we believe that all possible steps, consistent with those principles should be taken to avoid war and to find a basis for a peaceful solution.

We are taking all possible steps to protect Jamaica and its people from the effects of the crisis and to ensure the fullest national unity in any efforts that may be required.